

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

[0025] At each of the gateway platforms 130, 135, a processor operating a software application (*i.e.*, gateway software) coded in the C++ programming language and operating, for example, the Windows 2000 Professional platform receives requests from the customer 105 and transmits queries to one of the LIDBs 160, 165. Also, each of the gateway platforms 130, 135 receives responses from the LIDBs 160, 165 and sends the responses to the customers 105, 106 through one of the IP platforms 115, 120 over one of the plurality of RS232 interfaces 121, 122, 123, 124. Specifically, the gateway software on each gateway platform 130, 135 translates an ASCII text format request received from the customers 105, 106 into an SS7 format query for transmission to one of the LIDBs 160, 165. The gateway software sends a query to the LNP database 159 over the SS7 network 155 via one of the SS7 platforms 145, 150 to determine the appropriate LIDB to query, based upon the caller's telephone number. In one embodiment, the LIDB Access Routing Guide (LARG) from Telcordia Technologies, Inc. may also be used to determine the appropriate LIDB 160, 165 to query. As shown in Fig. 1, LNP 159, LIDB 160, and LIDB 165 are connected to the SS7 network 155 via links 156, 157, and 158, respectively.

Please replace paragraph [0049] with the following amended paragraph:

[0049] Although the present specification describes components and functions implemented in the embodiments with reference to particular standards and protocols, the invention is not limited to such standards and protocols. Each of the standards for Internet and other packet-switched network transmission (*e.g.*, TCP/IP) and public telephone networks (*e.g.*, AIN, CAIN) represent examples of the state of the art. Such standards are periodically superseded by faster or more efficient equivalents having essentially the same functions. Accordingly, replacement standards and protocols having the same functions are considered equivalents.